THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORETRIPATHY): (a)-and (b)After the liberalisation of Steel Sector, Production of Steel is determined by the interplay of market forces. The Steel Companies in the Private and Public Sector regulate their production as per market demand.

Repair of coke oven batteries by VSP

3009. DR. BIPLAB DAS GUPTA: will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Visakhapatnam Steel Plant had to incur an avoidable expenditure of Rs. 102 crores towards repair of coke oven batteries;

(b) whether it is a fact that the batteries which were commissioned in 1989, 1991 and 1992 had a guaranteed life of IS to 17 years;

(c) if so, the reasons for incurring the avoidable expenditure; and

(d) the action taken to recover the loss to the exchequer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OFTHE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORETRIPATHY): (a) Visakhapatnam Steel Plant incurred an expenditure of Rs. 82.78 crores towards repair of coke oven batteries.

(b) Yes, Sir. The coke oven batteries in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant were commissioned in 1989, 1991 and 1992. coke oven batteries of 7 metres height in steel plants have a normal life of IS—17 years. The three 7 metres high coke oven batteries of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant had no specific guarantee from the designers for a life of 15—17 years.

(c) and (d) The matter of premature break down of these coke oven batteries in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant was referred to CBI in April, 2001, which registered a preliminary inquiry. This inquiry is at an initial stage. The Government will take further appropriate action after completion of the inquiry.

Wage Board for the employees of SAIL

3010. MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set up a Wage Board for the SAIL employees;